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THE PREACHER.

[*For the Ambassador.*

THE MARTYR PRESIDENT:

A Discourse Preached on the Anniversary of the Death of Abraham Lincoln, in the Church of the Redeemer, Cincinnati, O.

BY REV. A. D. MAYO.

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"He being dead yet speaketh."—Heb. xi. 4.

The President of the United States, by proclamation, ordered the departments of the National Government at Washington to be closed yesterday, in solemn observance of the Martyrdom of Abraham Lincoln. To-day, the American people will spontaneously commemorate his death by public ceremonies, by services in thousands of Christian churches, and by the almost adoring gratitude of millions of afflicted hearts.

This is not a day for statesmen or ministers of religion to open afresh the wounds of the past, to inflame partisan animosities, or to heap execration on the fallen foes of the country. Dreadfully have our enemies sinned against God and mankind, and only future ages can reveal the full enormity of the folly and despot-

ism that drove them into such a war. It opened by firing upon the only flag on earth that symbolized the coming freedom of all men. It revolved through four ghastly years, of such horrors as Americans will blush to read in future days. It closed with the assassination of the best man who in modern times has been called to rule any people. But oh, how terribly has that crime been punished! Could any man now pass all over the territory which five years ago burst out into the insanity of rebellion, and hold in his mind what he saw of death, and sickness, and starvation; of poverty, of the annihilation of families, of the complete overthrow of governments and institutions, of the prostration of religion, of the utter ruin of society down to its foundation-stones, which are all thrown up as by an earthquake, he would stand aghast, and forget vengeance and hatred in amazement at what the Almighty had done. Never was such an outrage upon human society contemplated, as when the fifteen Slave States of this Union attempted, five years ago, to rear a slave empire on the ruins of the American Republic; and never was a people so utterly crushed in so short a time. Were they left to themselves to-day, they would drift through anarchy to civil perdition; and only because we have hold of them, and God has hold of us, have they any hope of a new civilization. Surely their punishment is enough for them; enough for the warning of mankind through long ages to come. It is demonstrated that what they tried to do can never succeed in a world governed by a God of justice and love. To-day, then, let their crimes and sufferings be forgotten and forgiven, as far as a sacred regard for liberty and

order will permit; and let us turn to the more pleasing task of contemplating the character and example of him who, being dead, yet speaketh, with a voice more potent than that of any monarch now upon the earth.

There are two classes of great public men who rise to speedy fame, and remain as fixed-stars in the reverence of mankind. The first class are, the great military chieftains, who deliver their country from imminent peril, like Cincinnatus and Scipio, Marlborough and Frederick, Wellington and Grant. But their fame, though permanent and genuine, is like that of noted discoverers, inventors, or material benefactors of the race. It is honor for a special work of physical deliverance, and has little to do with the personal character of the object. The most popular man in America now is the Lieutenant-General, and yet no public man is so little known, as far as concerns his opinions, personal character, and his qualifications for anything save splendid military success. Wellington was always rather an iron statue to his countrymen than a man. Frederick and Marlborough had eccentricities and faults enough to kill a hundred men less eminent for great military services. Every American honors Winfield Scott, but no American is edified when he makes a speech or writes a book. This sort of fame is genuine, but it is not of that kind which rests on personal reverence and love for the noblest qualities of manhood, tried in all possible emergencies of human responsibility.

But there is another, smaller, class of men, like William of Orange, Washington, and Lincoln, whose death is but the signal for the almost unanimous rever-

ence of the civilized world. While they live, like others, they divide men into fierce parties; are assailed by bitter foes and disappointed friends; are pronounced incompetent, incumbrances on the good cause they serve. They oftener than otherwise fall martyrs to truth and freedom. But when they really pass away, the world seems to recognize at once the sort of men they were, and henceforth no man can safely utter words of disparagement. Read, in the speeches and writings, and early history of the Republic, the bitterness of jealousy and hatred against Washington, during the twenty years when he was the Father of the People. Much that was then said may have been partially true; but what man with any regard for his own reputation would reiterate those charges now? There were things as offensive and insulting said and written against Abraham Lincoln, in the household of his friends, up to the day of his death, as were ever hurled against the worst President of the Republic; but would the most malignant rebel utter aloud such aspersions to-day, without a feeling of meanness and remorse? The race must have ideals—men that can be held up as models to the young in all generations. No man is actually good enough to deserve this perfect approval of humanity. But humanity is not strong enough to go on the road to progress without the help of men who shall form a chain from the average mass up through society, to the Saviour, and to God. The common instinct of the civilized world fastens on the eminent few, as such ideals and guides; and that verdict is never annulled: and no critic or censor is so universally and justly des-

pised as he who attempts to destroy this historical estimate by parading the human frailties of its venerable object.

Abraham Lincoln is probably to-day more honored, admired and loved all over the world, among all orders of men, than any character in human history. The reputation of William of Orange and Cromwell is limited by walls of religious prejudice and race. Washington challenges the veneration of the historian, the statesman, the leading progressive classes in all lands. But Lincoln is the friend of man. The emperors and statesmen of the world honor the man who has saved a continent from anarchy. The loyal people of the loyal United States confess that only such a man could have held them together, and at once learned and interpreted their best ideas. The friends of the Union admire the skill with which he carried the nation through a great war, with no State lost and the national honor unstained—yet, leaving its conquered enemies no cause to complain and no excuse for further resistance. The negro race, that bids fair to become in process of time a numerous and important element in human affairs, will always hold him second to the Saviour of the world; and all over the world the masses of the laboring, progressive and aspiring people, who long for more liberty and light, will cherish his memory as no other man was ever loved. A reporter of the New York press lately spent a night in visiting the lowest haunts of lust and violence in that city, and saw in every hovel he entered a picture of the Martyred President. Even in death, he conquered the class that furnished his assassins; and now, from high to low, he reigns first in the affections of a grateful world.

This reverence is not accidental or transient, or founded on ignorance of the real character of the man. No ruler in history was so well known to so many people during his life. He lived before the world, and in his breast was no dark concealment of motive or policy. Mankind is the only final critic and judge; and when the verdict comes up from every order of men so unmistakably as in the case of Abraham Lincoln, there is no danger of a reversal of judgment. That great fame of his rests on imperishable foundations. He was the most valuable kind of a man for the ruler of a nation in a crisis in human affairs, and he was one of the best men of his kind the world ever saw.

The deep foundations of his manhood were laid in a profound and unaffected piety, and a reverence for man as the divine child of God. He was no theologian; no sectarian partisan; not accustomed to sound the praises of great religious sects, which are supposed to command influence and votes. And many who saw only his common-sense, shrewd, or humorous estimate of men, accused him of levity in sacred things, and indifference to human freedom. But never did man more humbly and patiently wait on God than he. Never was there a ruler of men who so truly loved and revered the least, or so easily forgave the worst of men.

It is so common in public station to find men who have no faith in anything higher than force and statecraft; devoured by unholy ambition; contemners of the rights of man and defiant of God's higher law, that all men turned instinctively to one who was as religious, and as ready to be guided by Providence, as a little child. Hasty spirits ridiculed and

abused him because he declined to rush upon great changes in advance of the convictions of the people. But he knew that in such things as the relations of human society God is slowly educating the men of every generation from point to point; and to push on, regardless of this natural growth of sentiment, is only to tempt civil and social destruction. He felt, from the day he was elected to the great office he adorned, that his lot was cast in one of the great eras of history. He wished, first of all, to be the humble agent of God's purpose in the uplifting of man. He feared to get in the way of the majestic laws of national destiny. So his movements were as slow as the steps of Providence; and when he put down his foot, men felt that now indeed the hour of the freedom of man had come.

How simple, and yet how reverent and strong, was his conduct on the Proclamation of Emancipation. He heard all that all kinds of men had to say, with a patient mind. He bore the taunts of those friends of liberty whose zeal outran their knowledge. He forgot the threats of vengeance that stole up to him from the dark places of despotism. He fortified himself in all the legal aspects of the great cause. He repressed his generals who proclaimed the New Republic at the head of armies. Slowly did he see the hand nearing the hour on the dial-plate of the nation's history. At length, the North was invaded, and, as he said to Mr. Chase, he resolved, one night, lying in his bed, meditating on the state of the country, that if it should please God to drive the army of Lee out of Pennsylvania, he would proclaim freedom to the slaves. Lee was driven from Pennsylvania, and Mr. Lincoln said, "I wish he had

been driven further; but I have got to do it, and I will issue the proclamation." Only a mind like his could thus, at the end of its own power and wisdom, take the hand of God Almighty, and submit to be led like a little child into the act that would be a heritage of everlasting fame.

Thus founded on a genuine religious faith, which was a perpetual guide and support to his troubled career, he built up on such foundations one of the rarest executive characters among men. He combined, as no man of our country has, the complete consecration to the idea of human progress with the wisest circumspection in dealing with masses of men and deeply-rooted insitutions of society. The country was thronged with sincere lovers of liberty and humanity, who knew little of the actual state of American affairs, and who, so that a good end were sought, were reckless about the steps to success. There were even men who believed so devotedly in order, peace and outward concord, that they would permit none to be sacrificed to save these. Between these fierce parties in the state, he walked in constant martyrdom. He was so sympathetic, that he felt through his soul all that was thought and said of him, and died daily in the slaughter and sorrows of his countrymen. But he loved liberty so much better than its heedless advocates, that nothing could persuade him to put it in peril by rash attempts to establish it beyond the power of the people to sustain it. He loved order, and law and peace so much better than the peace and order and law faction, that he determined to lay the foundations of perpetual union in the freedom of all men in America. While wielding greater power

than any tyrant on earth, the commander of a million soldiers, he so blended rigor and moderation that when the war was done his mighty armies melted away, and peace and law came back as quietly as the sun rises after a stormy night.

It is the hardest thing to convince men, in the moment of their passion and hot haste, that this is the true executive manhood which succeeds. But when the success comes, all men applaud and worship the great leader and organizer of liberty; though they so quickly turn again into their old ways of narrowness. But this sort of men hold society together. Every neighborhood would explode into a Babel once a month, were it notfor a few wise men and women who love liberty and order, and know how to teach the two to move in accordant steps. Every nation that does anything for man is guided by such men, who teach the ignorant, selfish, violent masses to respect humanity a little more, and consent to some slight advance for human good. America might as easily have been hurled into the pit of military despotism or chronic anarchy during the last five years, as France, or Germany, or Italy has been, again and again. There were generals enough to play the dictator; politicians enough to head as many factions as the days of the year. But, though there never was such a revolution on earth, society was undisturbed in every loyal village in the land; and though the earth swarmed with armed hosts, and a girdle of warships answered each other's signals round three thousand miles of ocean and river-coast, no general or admiral for one instant wrenched the sword from the hands of that kindly and paternal Commander-in-Chief. He guided us over the awful

perils of the disruption of slave society so gradually and naturally, that we hardly recognize to-day that we are on the other side of a deluge that threatened to engulf a continent, and pour its devastating flood through all the world.

His patriotism was only his religion and his wise conduct of affairs applied to his country. He loved America because he thought it was the promised land, where mankind could achieve a higher estate than ever before. He loved the Union, because in it he saw the Providential method of securing the highest good of man in the Republic. He loved his country in the line of his love for God and man, and truth and civilization. He loved it so fondly, that he spoke, and thought, and acted almost impersonally; and in his halting, thoughtful, sometimes awkward, but always onward career, it seemed as if the Great Republic itself had entered into him, and made him its representative. He aspired to no fame, no notoriety, no leadership that separated him for an instant from his suffering country. Only too grateful if he could learn its destiny, and be borne upon the topmost wave of its majestic advance, he did not aim at the impossible creative power which is the insanity of strong but irreverent agitators of men. He was no agitator, but an administrator of the purposes of God respecting the people of his native land.

He had that noble incapacity to hate, even his enemies, which is the true indication of the grandest order of manhood. When Jesus said, "Love your enemies," I suppose he could hardly conceive how anybody could hate or despise the worst man. He could pity him; could punish him, for correction; could see God's re-

tributions go over him; but could neither despise nor hate. So I doubt if Lincoln could have hated the worst sinner, or permanently despised the greatest fool in America. Many violent people talked of that as his weakness; as if it were not the easiest thing for any bad-tempered man to curse, or any supercilious man to despise almost everybody. It was his strength, the divine manhood in him, his likeness to God, that made him so tender to all the rebellious children of the Republic; so ready to welcome them home, whenever they would come back and share our common lot. It was no lack of courage, no amiable folly, that sealed his lips and kept his heart soft—even when the men he trusted were toiling to upset him, and throw disparagement upon his motives and disgrace upon his name. He knew that they would yet be led up to high places to testify to his sincerity and patriotism, and held his peace. So, when the war was done, his enemies were ready to submit to his clemency. He died, leaving no printed or spoken word that held contempt or malice for any child of God.

It would be a pleasant task to delineate yet other features of this rare though simple manhood: his unpretending courage, and dauntless fortitude, and tireless industry, and unwearied patience and persistence, that challenged time itself; we might describe his homely yet almost saintly ambition to deserve well of his country, and do some good thing for his fellow-beings; and his intellectual power, so like the half-conscious working of Providence itself; so admirably adapted to let in light on every side of that broad and comprehensive manhood; so original and natural in its processes; so clear in

its results; so on the level of men's real thought, and apt to behold the real value of human affairs; so ready to see rising merit, though his wondrous patience often bore all things from men he hoped yet to save for their country's weal. But we can not say these things. For generations to come, our children, and they who follow them, will dwell fondly on this theme; and never will the American people be less grateful than to-day, that Heaven gave such a man to the Union and the world.

And, now, may his nobility shame us out of our narrowness, our hot wrath, our partisan fury, our impatience with Providence, our mischievous readiness to rekindle the flames of war, and make this wound of one half of the nation a chronic malady of the Republic. Let those who have been defeated so utterly confess that God was against them, and resolve to help us once more rebuild the waste places in a broader and statelier fabric of human rights. Let those who chafe under the slow growth of a Christian civilization remember that God has His own times, and only asks them to do their own work and be content. Oh, it will be a shameful thing if now, with all our prospects for the grandest success ever vouchsafed to any people, we put liberty and order again in peril! Forbid it, father of our country, who toiled and died to bring us where we are! Forbid it, our Father in heaven, who rulest over the nations of the earth, and guidest all human destinies towards eternal love and peace!

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